



PROTECTED A

For information

## CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY NATIONAL SECURITY RESPONSE PROTOCOL

For the President

### ISSUE

Although a date has not been confirmed, it is anticipated that during the month of September 2019, the Government of Canada (GC) will be hosting a Deputy Minister level table-top exercise for a national security event, particularly should a response be necessary during the Writ Period. This briefing note will serve to advise you of the role of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) in a GC operational response to a national security event.

### BACKGROUND

Under the *Emergency Management Act*, the Minister of Public Safety is responsible for exercising leadership relating to emergency management activities among government institutions and in cooperation with provinces/territories, as well as coordinating the GC response to an emergency.

The *Emergency Management Act* also provides that each minister accountable for a government institution is also responsible for emergency management activities, as related to his or her area of responsibility, and is to identify risks and prepare emergency management plans in respect of those risks.

For national security purposes, the GC responds to national security threats along three lines of activity: threat identification and management, investigations and incident response, and operational/emergency and consequence management response. Threat identification and management is led by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and manifests itself through the National Terrorism Threat Level (NTTL). Criminal related investigations and local incident response will be led by the RCMP in coordination with the police of jurisdiction.

The broader operational/emergency and consequence management response will be led by Public Safety Canada. Two national-level interdepartmental plans guide a national security threat or incident response. The overarching operational response and consequence management at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels fall under the Federal Emergency Response Plan

(FERP). Security and intelligence related activities are guided by the Federal Terrorism Response Plan (FTRP).

## CURRENT STATUS

The CBSA is engaged in national security threat and event response at multiple levels.

At the national level, the CBSA is the GC lead for Border Services planning and coordination within the FERP, commonly known as Emergency Support Function 13, as well as the national *Plan for the Movement of People and Goods During and Following an Emergency*. Under the FTRP, the CBSA is responsible for ensuring the border integrity of Canadians and supporting the RCMP and other agencies engaged in threat management and event response. Together, these plans ensure that, when needed, appropriate measures are taken to maintain high levels of security at the border while ensuring the unimpeded movement of legitimate people and goods.

Within the CBSA, an evaluation based on conditions is undertaken with respect to the need for Agency-level threat management, operational response planning, and overall coordination of activities. While the CBSA Regions are responsible for conducting the frontline actions that deliver the operational outcomes in support of the national response, the CBSA maintains connection points for operational and intelligence information sharing through the Enforcement and Intelligence Operations Directorate, the International Region, the National Targeting Centre, and the Border Operations Centre. To that end, the CBSA manages its threat response by linking any changes to its operational posture by way of the CBSA Vigilance Protocol and based on the NTTL established by ITAC.

The Vigilance Protocol is designed to standardize how the Agency modifies its operational posture in response to emerging local, national, and international threats and as part of a concerted whole-of-government response to active threats. It includes a decision-making model used to determine the level of response required to address a threat and then communicate the changes in operational posture to regional management for action. When the Vigilance Protocol is triggered, the Executive Threat Response Group (ETRG), a pan-CBSA Director General-level group, will convene to collaborate and determine an appropriate course of action, making timely recommendations on both tactical and corporate response measures to the Vice-President of the Intelligence and Enforcement Branch for approval. If required, the ETRG may recommend that a Threat Response Directive be implemented and/or that an updated national operational plan for an event be developed.

As a member of the ETRG, the Chief Security Officer, at the internal corporate level, will coordinate to ensure that Agency information, assets, and employees are secured and protected against injury as well as ensure support for the plans of the continuity of Agency operations and services.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Once a date has been confirmed for this Deputy Minister level table-top exercise, a package containing supporting documentation will be forwarded to your office by the government department hosting the exercise.

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